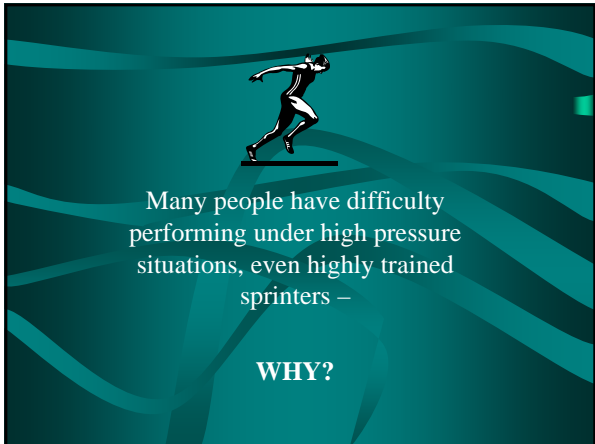
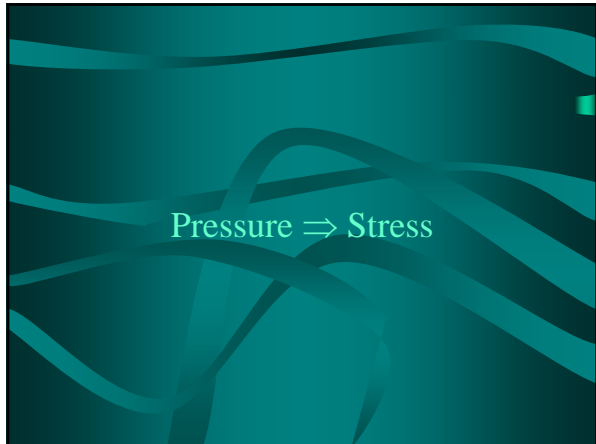
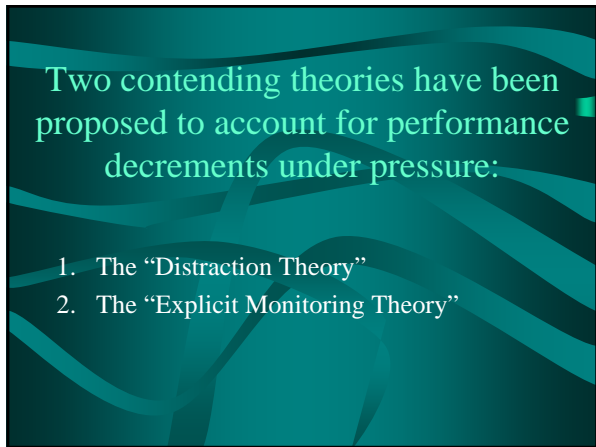


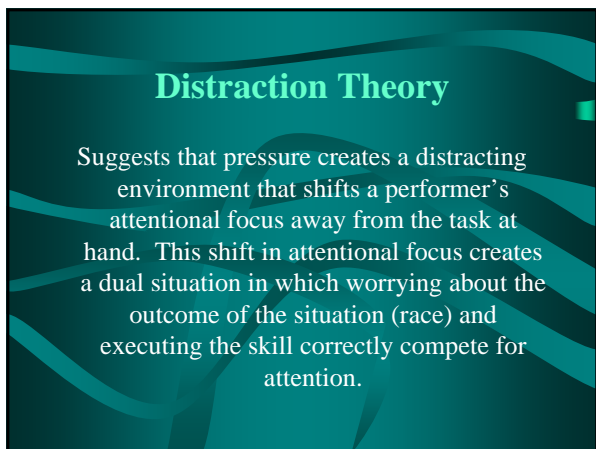


Pressure is like a virus that affects each person differently. For some it's a challenge to be met, something that energizes and emboldens. It brings out their best because they feel most alive when they're risking everything and pushing themselves to the edge of their capabilities...But for most, pressure is an enemy to be beaten back, draining rather than invigorating (Ryan, 1995)









Distraction Theory

Pressure increases anxiety and self-consciousness, causing a sprinter to consciously think about executing the skill correctly, ultimately resulting in diminished performance since they are unable to direct their full attention to the task at hand.



Explicit Monitoring Theory or Self-Focus Theory

Proposes that pressure causes individuals to pay attention to performance elements, which interferes with the automaticity of a learned skill –

Once a skill becomes automated, it no longer demands conscious attention. Shifting attention to step-by-step details of an automatic process disrupts well-learned or proceduralized skills.

Sources of Pressure

Internal –

1. Competitors disposition (anxiety, expectations, perfectionism, etc.)
2. Cognitions
3. Psychological states
4. Self-perceptions (self-esteem, self-confidence, etc.)
5. Perceptions of significant others

Sources of Pressure

External –

1. Significant others
2. Parental pressure – especially how they react prior to competition
3. Audience
4. Coaches, teammates, and governing organizations
5. Media

How to Handle Pressure

1. Self consciousness training – practice being accustomed to performing under self-focused conditions
2. Increase arousal not anxiety – if an athlete interprets their higher arousal levels as pleasant and beneficial to performance, then confidence will increase and so will performance.
3. Approach events the same way all the time.

The Sport Pressure Checklist

(Rushall & Sherman, 1987)
